

## REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for allowing claims 6, 7 and 9.

Claims 23-27 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) on Ross in view of Maehara, the Examiner reasoning that Ross discloses all of the invention of independent claim 23 but for the claimed “a groove or recess is formed in said one surface between mutually adjacent ones of the minute holes,” for which the Examiner refers to Maehara’s disclosure of a groove or recess 13a between mutually adjacent minute holes. This rejection and its supporting reasoning are respectfully traversed in view of the amendments to claim 23 above.

Applicants have amended claim 23 to state that the plate-shaped body is curved over its surface or folded and continuously deformed at the location of each minute hole. This amendment finds support in Figs. 11 and 12a-12c and at page 30, lines 10-20. The purpose of this amendment is to make the mesh plate of the invention (the “plate-shaped body” of the claims) take a curved or folded shape so that it will lie flat when biased with a compression spring.

Mesh plate 69 disclosed in Ross is completely flat, and there is no suggestion in Ross to make the plate other than completely flat. When Ross’ plate is biased, it will curve, unlike the claimed plate. Although the central portion of Maehara’s nozzle disk has a curved area 13a, Maehara’s nozzle disk is neither curved over its entire surface nor folded and does not become flat when biased. Furthermore, there is no reason apparent from Maehara why a person of ordinary skill in the art would be motivated to do what applicants claims. Accordingly, the combination of references proposed by the Examiner does not teach the invention of claim 23 as amended, and the rejection of claims 23-27 under 35 USC 103(a) should be withdrawn.

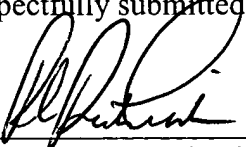
Early action allowing claims 23-27 in addition to allowed claims 6, 7 and 9 is solicited.

In the event that the transmittal letter is separated from this document and the Patent and Trademark Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicants petition for any required relief including extensions of time and authorize the Commissioner to charge

the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to  
**Deposit Account No. 03-1952** referencing 357672000510.

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Respectfully submitted,

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